DETROIT ECONOMIC JUSTICE COALITION

2025 POLICY PLATFORM

OUR VISION FOR A PROSPEROUS, EQUITABLE, AND FAIR DETROIT FOR ALL DETROITERS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Detroit has made tremendous strides since facing bankruptcy in 2013, but there are still far too many Detroiters that have been left out of its revival. We have much more to do to secure prosperity for Detroiters.

A 2021 study found that Detroit's median household income is $31,000 **less** than households in the region,[1] and almost $45,000 less than a family of four needs to survive.[2] Data suggests that only 26 percent of Detroit households are considered middle class as compared with 39 percent in the region.[3]

Despite the growing diversity of the region's workforce, workers of color remain crowded in lower paying and lower opportunity occupational groups, while white workers are overrepresented in many higher paying professions. The persistent inequities cost the region an estimated $28 billion in lost economic activity per year.[4] While the City of Detroit has a growing number of good paying jobs with the benefits Detroiters deserve, including at the City of Detroit itself, we still hold less than 30% of all jobs in the city.

A 2024 report stated many Detroiters rank issues at the heart of advancing a holistic economic justice agenda high on the list of their priorities, including neighborhood maintenance and structural blight, quality jobs, transportation, housing security, homelessness, and economic inequity.[5]

As a group of local advocacy leaders, business leaders, service providers, and funders who are committed to advancing structural reforms in Detroit and Michigan, we believe that the future of Detroit requires that we advance and enact policy and practice changes that allow for *all* Detroiters to thrive.

---

[1] In 2021 the median household income was $36,140 in Detroit as compared to $67,153 region. From: PolicyLink, Langston, A. (n.d.-a). *Advancing Workforce Equity in Metro Detroit: A blueprint for action*. PolicyLink. https://www.policylink.org/research/workforce-equity-metro-detroit

[2] Data suggests that a living wage in Detroit for a family of four with one adult working and two children is $38.83/hour or approximately $80,769 a year before taxes. Living Wage Calculation:
Glasmeier, Dr. A. (2025, February 10). *Living wage calculator*. Living Wage Calculator - Living Wage Calculation for Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, MI. https://livingwage.mit.edu/metros/19820#:~:text=%2C%20%2C%20Living%20Wage%2C%20Poverty%20Wage%2C%20Minimum,(1%20WORKING)%2C%203%20Children%2C%20$40.75%2C%20$17.59%2C%20$10.33%2C

[3] Detroit Future City,
Economic equity dashboard: Detroit Future City. Detroit Future City |. (2022, February 3). https://detroitfuturecity.com/resources/data-dashboard/

[4] Langston, A. (n.d.-b). *Advancing Workforce Equity in Metro Detroit: A blueprint for action*. PolicyLink. https://www.policylink.org/research/workforce-equity-metro-detroit

[5] Detroiters highlight safety, neighborhood maintenance, and housing affordability as top local issues,
Cecilia, M., & Fan, Y. (2024, September). *Detroit Metro Area Communities Study - DMACS* . Issue Brief | DETROITERS HIGHLIGHT SAFETY, NEIGHBORHOOD MAINTENANCE, AND HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AS TOP LOCAL ISSUES. https://detroitsurvey.umich.edu/

OUR STORY

The Detroit Economic Justice Coalition (DEJC) is a group of local advocacy leaders, business leaders, service providers, and funders who are committed to advancing structural reforms in Detroit and Michigan. We are intentionally a diverse, multi-sector coalition coming together to identify and advance shifts in policy and practice for all Detroiters. We came to this table as individuals committed to economic justice for Detroiters, rather than representatives of the organizations and institutions we work for. As authors of this platform we, individually, endorse and support the policy ideas described here. Not all of us support or endorse all of the policy ideas described here. Our individual support of the policy ideas presented in this platform does not necessarily mean that the organizations we work at support any or all of the policy ideas represented here.

As a collective, we recognize that entrenched and racialized inequality and poverty in Detroit and in Michigan are the result of our systems which were designed to perpetuate inequity in outcomes and opportunities. Historic and current policies and practices have harmed too many individuals and families, kept too many people from opportunities, thwarted our growth as a city and state, eroded basic human needs and rights, and negatively impacted our communities. Collectively we promote targeted shifts in policy, practice, and systems to ensure that existing needs are met and those who are marginalized have equal and fair access to opportunity.

We seek to work collectively to support, promote, and advance policy, practice, and system change that:

- Equitably distributes opportunities in our city and state inclusive of education, workforce and economic development, housing, safety net, and wealth building opportunities.
- Promotes a fair and just economy that redistributes wealth, income, and power to ensure that everyone can thrive and have quality of life.
- Acknowledges and redresses historic and current economic harms.
- Allows people to have agency, choice, and freedom to self-determine and pursue a dignified and creative life.

OUR MEMBERS

- Angie Reyes
- Branden Snyder
- Camarrah Morgan
- Chioke Mose-Telesford
- Dan Varner
- Danielle Atkins
- Danielle Atkinson
- Dwan Dandridge
- Hector Hernandez
- Leila Hilel
- Jewel Knolton
- Margo Dalal
- Margrit Allen
- Mark Crain
- Molly Sweeney
- MoReno R. Taylor, II
- Pat Cooney
- Scott Holiday
- Stephanie Chang
- Steve Tobocman
- Trina Shanks

GUIDING VALUES

As a table, we hold the following guiding values. These values are intended to support us in making decisions as a coalition, guiding us in establishing priorities, and acting as pillars when we have conflict, disagreements, or need checks and balances. We actively lean into these values in our process and in determining our policy priorities.

Abundance Mindset. An abundance mindset is the belief that there are enough resources, wealth, happiness, cooperation, collective imagination, care, and success in the world for everyone. This perspective encourages us to be optimistic and generous, and to approach policy, practice, and systems challenges and solutions with an orientation that resources and systems are not fixed. We understand and believe that the pursuit of policies, systems, and practices that enable everyone to thrive requires us to reimagine public resources, policies, practices, and systems from the perspective that everyone can thrive.

Address Anti-Black Racism Practices and Policies. Active process of identifying, interrogating, and challenging racism, white supremacy, and redistributing power in an equitable manner through changing policies, systems, and practices.

Democratic and Transparent. We strive to reflect, support, and advance democratic values that reflect freedom, equality, justice, and fairness. We believe in free and fair election processes, where everyone's votes are counted and everyone has equal, easy access to voting . We strive to reflect, support, and advance transparent and open public systems and government and other institutions.

Holistic. We recognize that people, places, issues, and geographies are not siloed. We strive to support, advance, and promote policy, practice, and system changes that reflect the whole person. We will strive to understand and support policy, practice, and system change that is un-siloed.

JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion)

- **Justice.** Identifying and removing policy, practice, and systemic barriers that prevent diversity, equity, and inclusion of difference. Making fair and equitable decisions about the distribution of opportunities, power, and resources through interpersonal and institutional engagement.
- **Equity.** Advancing policy, practice, and system change action to address (dis)advantages based on difference. Equity implies that an individual may need to experience or receive something different (not equal to or the same as something or someone else) to maintain fairness and access. Everyone has a fair opportunity to attain their full potential.
- **Diversity.** Holding and honoring differences of people with respect to, but not limited by, race; ethnicity; color; religion; background; national or geographic origin; age; gender, gender identity or expression; socioeconomic status; language; sexual orientation; (dis)ability status; education; thoughts; political perspective; and skills, among others.

- **Inclusion.** Deliberately and authentically welcoming and valuing differences. Different perspectives are respectfully heard and brought into all into processes, activities, leadership and opportunities, and decision/policy making. Every individual feels a sense of belonging and has the opportunity to participate.

Self-determination. We strive to be person, family, and community-centered. We seek to support, promote, and advance policy, practice, and system change that creates the conditions by which communities, families, and individuals can have choice, agency, and freedom.

OUR POLICY PLATFORM

We understand that there are changes our policies, practices, and systems require to ensure that everyone in Detroit and Michigan can thrive.

Our 2025 policy platform elevates our priorities while recognizing the need for other structural shifts in policy, systems, and practices to enable a vibrant and prosperous Detroit and Michigan.

As a coalition, a number of factors have determined our 2025 policy, practice, and system priorities, including, but not solely limited to, the opportunity to advance an economic justice agenda alongside new leadership at the City of Detroit. We recognize that our platform may require multi-year commitments and efforts to advance the goals we have identified.

Beginning in 2024, the DEJC engaged in a process to identify its priorities which included:

- Identifying the problems and issues the coalition wanted to solve, our vision for Detroiters' future, values we need to advance the work, and actions necessary to get there.
- Refining our policy ideas by rooting our ideas in our future vision and aligned our ideas under similar issues and examples from the field.
- Ensuring everyone understood the nuances of the various policy issues we were advancing.
- Prioritizing and deciding on our Policy Pillars to build our platform around.
- Researching, discussing and identifying the top policies to advance within each of our Policy Pillars.

ENABLING CONDITIONS

Revenue and Budget Fairness

Our coalition recognizes the need to enact fair and just taxation and revenue-generating policies in our city and state to create the conditions by which every person can thrive.

As a collective, the DEJC believes that progressive income tax policies, City of Detroit entertainment/tourist taxes, and/or other tax measures must be advanced to secure the investments necessary to advance policies where every person can thrive. While our policy platform does not call for a specific policy action or vehicle to advance revenue and budget fairness in our city, we understand that doing so will create the enabling conditions for our policy priorities to thrive and for residents in Detroit and Michigan to get a fair shake.

Quality, Accessible, and Inclusive Education System

Our coalition realizes that a quality, accessible, and inclusive education system is essential to achieve and advance economic justice and attract people and families to our city. While the City of Detroit does not have jurisdiction over the Detroit Public Schools Community District or other schools in the city and our policy platform does not explicitly include education-focused policy recommendations, we strongly urge the next Mayor of Detroit to use their position to help advance structural shifts in public education funding and policies for the benefit of Detroit students.

We need the next Mayor of Detroit to find ways to ensure that quality schools are available for all of Detroit's children in all neighborhoods across the city.

Redressing and Stopping the Harmful Effects of the Criminal Legal System

Our coalition understands that the criminal legal system has negatively impacted far too many Detroiters and their families, and continues to do so. While our policy platform does not include specific recommendations for addressing the overreach of the criminal legal system in Detroit, we acknowledge the need to advance systemic reform at the local and state levels.

We call on the next Mayor of Detroit to pursue an agenda that ensures that Detroiters living in poverty and homelessness are not criminalized. We call on the next Mayor of Detroit to ensure that people returning from incarceration in our prisons and county jails and those with criminal records have access to social safety net supports, workforce development services, and quality jobs.

OUR POLICY PILLARS

As a coalition we have identified three, intersecting, policy pillars as central to advancing economic justice in Detroit and in Michigan. Our pillars are:

01	**Revolutionize our Workforce Development System**
02	**Transform our Frayed & Inadequate Safety Net**
03	**Ensure Access to Employment & Good Jobs for Everyone in Detroit**

We believe that residents should have a true voice in shaping and co-designing the public systems, policies, and programs that impact them. Throughout our policy platform we elevate critical opportunities for the City of Detroit to co-develop policies and strategies with and alongside residents to everyone can thrive.

POLICY PILLAR 01

Revolutionize our Workforce System

The workforce system is simply not designed to meet the vastly different career, education, and training needs of all Detroiters. This is not an issue specifically isolated to Detroit. Despite the great work, commitment, and expertise of providers and organizations in Detroit, the issues we face are structural. Providers and staff are often hampered by policy restrictions, funding requirements, and contracts that at times allow little room for innovation or autonomy. It is time to augment and transform our workforce system.

Like many other cities across the country, our workforce system is siloed, underfunded, and designed by law and funder requirements to reward short-term outcomes that do not always put Detroiters on a path to prosperity. Residents are either excluded from opportunities because their path to a job will take longer, or placed into a job that doesn't provide the income or quality job they deserve. In order to support a thriving city, we must equip everyone to participate fully in the labor market and co-design solutions alongside the residents we aim to serve.

While the next Mayor of Detroit has the opportunity to shape the strategy of the public workforce system, they can also use their convening power to bring all the organizations in the workforce ecosystem to work towards a shared vision and better leverage the existing resources within the city government.

We need to build on the progress made over the last decade to create a system that works for **all** Detroiters, regardless if they walk into a public workforce career center or the workforce nonprofit in their neighborhood.

To continue to transform our workforce system and make it a system that works for all Detroiters, we must:

1. Adopt and resource a "No Wrong Door" approach that allows all Detroiters to access workforce, education and social services at all public workforce, adult education and social service centers.

For too many Detroiters, they bear the burden of traversing a myriad of social service, education, and workforce programs that are geographically spread out, require duplicative assessment and eligibility processes. For many Detroiters like high school youth facing school-to-career transitions or adults exiting from adult basic education programs, the incoherent web of social, workforce, and education services prevents them from reaching their goals. Too many Detroit residents are in positions where one unexpected bill or a reduction in wages can lead to catastrophic impacts on their livelihood, health, or housing.

On the flipside, workforce, education, and social service organizations working to support Detroiters in search of economic stability and growth are too hampered by regulatory policies that dictate who

should receive services, what services they can receive, and the amount of services that should be given. Exceptionally dedicated staff at these organizations face the ridiculously high expectations of knowing a complicated web of potential referral partners to send their clients to, and a lack of easily accessible funding to provide the emergency assistance their clients need.

It is time for a worker and resident centered approach.

We call on the next Mayor of Detroit to build on and learn from models like the CityLink Center in Cincinnati, which co-locates multiple organizations and streamlines the intake process and resources to holistically serve residents, or the Consumer Information Exchange in Illinois, which improves outcomes for people experiencing homelessness through a shared governance, data, and service delivery process between health and social service providers. We encourage the next Mayor to also learn from previous pilot project efforts at Detroit at Work that provided flexible barrier mitigation funds and establish a funding mechanism that could be deployed quickly, efficiently, and with no strings attached.

The next Mayor of Detroit has the opportunity to advance a robust co-design process with residents to understand worker and resident needs and determine how to structure and support a web of aligned social service, education, and workforce programs. Together they should partner with residents, philanthropy, providers, advocates, city departments, and others to co-design a "no-wrong-door" approach that can seamlessly connect Detroiters with critical social, education, and workforce services. Central to this co-design process must be pathways for residents to have agency and power to inform and drive the design, policies, and services of this approach.

2. Publicly share data across workforce programs and services in order to assess progress over time, identify gaps in the system, and provide transparency to Detroiters.

Currently providers, advocates, and residents are unable to monitor, track, or understand the employment, education, and support service provided to Detroiters. Following the lead of other cities like San Antonio and New York City, Detroit should become a model of transparency and accountability by reporting and evaluating the short and long-term career and income growth of residents served through their funded programs and services.

The Mayor's Workforce Development Board should report on data related to programs and services funded by both public and private funds that Detroit at Work manages on at least a quarterly basis, mirroring what other workforce boards across the country have already started. The design of this should be co-designed with the myriad of workforce service providers in our ecosystem and residents, and should not simply mirror federal reporting requirements. Data should include demographics like education levels, age, race, or district, wages, industry, credential attainment, supportive services provided and robust customer feedback.

It should also include more contextual citywide data, like income, growth in home ownership, the number of Detroiters unemployed or out of the labor market, education attainment, and the number of residents returning from incarceration in prison or county jails.

The Mayor's Office should also report on hiring and permanency data from any corporation that has received a tax incentive over the last 10 years, including those required to hire Detroiters.

3. Support the restructure of the Downtown Development Authority Tax so money is helping meet the needs of Detroiters, not wealthy business owners.

Since 1976, the DDA has captured taxes and invested it into the growth of downtown Detroit and its businesses. It's time to shift that allocation of funding back into serving the needs of Detroit residents, most of whom are locked out of the jobs and careers of the downtown Detroit businesses who have benefited from the DDA's tax capture.

Funding from the DDA tax could be better and more equitably leveraged as seed funding for other workforce projects, like the No Wrong Door approach, expansion of social enterprises, or emerging or promising models for testing, learning, and expansion. Funding for the DDA could support the built infrastructure for public transportation, affordable housing, or office to residential building conversions.

We call on the next Mayor of Detroit to advance a process by which the DDA is restructured. Such a process should be co-created with residents, advocates, philanthropy and others to ensure that the future of the DDA meets Detroit resident's needs first.

4. Expand social enterprises across the city by providing capital and technical assistance.

Social enterprises are businesses that operate like a traditional business but prioritize a specific social outcome, like helping people overcome barriers to employment through real work opportunities, over generating profits. Employment focused social enterprises are a proven model to increase income for individuals in need of more supportive work environments and provide pathways into good careers.

Detroit has a number of emerging and thriving social enterprises that are providing a double and triple bottom line impact for the city, but we need more. Research continues to demonstrate that social enterprises meet the needs of workers, and communities, reduce homelessness and gun violence, and have a social return on investment. Social enterprises often work with people returning from incarceration, youth, people experiencing homelessness, and others facing multiple barriers to employment.

For these businesses to thrive and for Detroit to be an epicenter of social enterprise innovation and expansion, the City has a mandate to support and resource these dedicated entrepreneurs in the same way that other businesses are supported in the city.

Like other cities and states, Detroit should advance procurement policies to allow for social enterprises to be more competitive when bidding on public contracts. Los Angeles, for example, codified the definition of social enterprises, opening up opportunities for social enterprises to bid on city contracts. Additionally, we call on the city to allow for loans and capital to be funneled to social enterprises to bolster the capacity of these businesses to expand in the marketplace. Similar to California and elsewhere, Detroit should dedicate resources to support technical assistance for emerging social enterprises.

5. Advance a commitment to align the public workforce and homeless systems to ensure that Detroiters facing housing instability have access to quality jobs.

Research and direct experience bears out that housing stability is inextricably linked with economic justice. Many people who experience homelessness are working but not earning enough to keep a stable roof over their heads. Many people experiencing homelessness want to work, but face a myriad of barriers to securing employment and quality jobs.

The workforce system and the homeless services system have shared goals to address the employment and income needs of people experiencing homelessness - despite this, the systems lack systemic coordination. For the workforce system, people experiencing homelessness are a priority population for services in statute. For the homeless services system, measures of success for the system include documenting increases in income by individuals who participate in programs.

Moreover, Detroit simply does not have the number of shelter beds and other short-term housing solutions to needed to support residents facing housing insecurity. In December of 2024, for example, of the 2,506 intake calls Detroit's Coordinated Entry System, 1,997 were placed on the shelter waitlist. This lack of housing resources means that too many Detroiters are at risk for experiencing hardship and life-threatening consequences; moreover, the shelter system is not designed to support residents' housing needs.

We urge the next Mayor of Detroit to build on work from the last few years to align the public workforce and homeless systems, support systems coordination with other supports like behavioral health, and better leverage the resources and expertise of each system to provide more holistic support to residents and address the root cause of the issue. We call on the next Mayor to look at efforts in Maryland, Illinois, and Los Angeles and other places to explore how to resource and enact stronger systems collaboration across the workforce and homelessness systems.

POLICY PILLAR 02
Transform our Frayed and Inadequate Safety Net

Our social safety net is letting too many people fall through the cracks. The policies and funding have not adapted to the needs and changing landscape of our city. Too many people are impoverished, hungry, without safe or adequate housing, and struggling. Yes, some of this is a result of federal and state policies, programs, and funding. But Detroit can shift the paradigm for what is possible at a city level by using the power we do have, whether in funding allocation, program implementation, or advocacy and lobbying efforts. This is even more important now, given the current national political context. We need to enact better solutions that do not put the financial burden on the already overtaxed population.

In order to mend our social safety net in the city, we must:

1. Advance housing security for all Detroiters.

Everyone deserves a safe and secure place to call home. Just like communities across the United States, Detroit needs to address our housing affordability, preservation, and land use from a variety of angles to ensure that people have a stable roof over their heads. Equally important, we must maintain and expand rental protections and ensure that our most vulnerable residents have a place to call home. City planning should consider where housing is being built, to be alongside schools, jobs, commercial corridors, parks and public transportation options.

Research shows that under a broader definition of homelessness that includes not only children in shelters but also those doubled up with family or friends or in some other sort of temporary arrangement, 16% of Detroit children are homeless at any given time.

First, we call on the next Mayor to set an ambitious and defensible north star goal for housing Detroit families of all types over the next 10 years.

To advance this goal, we call on the next Mayor of Detroit to:

- Finance the building of affordable housing units leveraging asset backed financing options, Community Development Funds, and the City's Land Trust fund among other options.
- Actively support and incentivize the building of residential property units by supporting the infrastructure necessary including preparing the site, soil, and managing water, gas, and other utility hookups.
- Establish incentives or requirements for landlords to keep or transition their units to affordable and accessible housing.

- Reinstate the City's down payment assistance program for first time home buyers and lower income home buyers.
- Increase fair-chance housing options for people who are justice impacted.
- Establish a fund for home repair resources.

Second, we also call on the Mayor to advance protections for residents who are property renters:

- Fully fund the right to counsel for renters facing eviction.
- The Detroit Residential and Tenant Ordinance, which the City Council revised in October 2024, aims to improve safety and quality in rental homes while simplifying compliance requirements for property owners and strengthening tenant protections. The ordinance is set to be piloted in May 2025. We call on the next Mayor to actively monitor the implementation of the new ordinance and produce a report of findings and recommendations for further improvement of tenant protections and rental property safety.
- Currently, there is little to no comprehensive, timely data available to understand the housing conditions and experiences of renters in Detroit. The lack of information on rental properties promotes a housing market of minimal oversight and can create conditions for deferred maintenance and tenant mistreatment. This lack of oversight, combined with the overall scarcity of homes affordable for low-income renters in most communities, creates a housing market in which property owners have excessive power over predominantly low-income renters with very few alternative affordable housing options. We call on the next Mayor of Detroit to establish a rental registry and require landlords that are renting at least six units to populate it with information such as:
  - Up-to-date contact information of key individuals involved with the management and maintenance of the property, and an emergency contact who can be contacted 24 hours a day.
  - Information and documentation regarding the last property inspection, the number of units owned, and how much has been and is currently being charged for rent.
  - The property's connections to water and electricity, and an average monthly utility cost.

2. Enact a Working Parents Tax Credit to put more money into the hands of hard working parents across our city.

The share of Michigan households that did not earn enough to pay for basic necessities *increased* sharply between 2021 and 2022. And most social safety net programs in Michigan reach only a small fraction of households in need.

A working parents tax cut could be life changing for families who are raising an estimated 250,000 children in Michigan by putting more money into the pockets of hard-working parents. Evidence suggests that a Working Parents Tax credit could encourage work and is good for families, employers, and entire communities as the spillover effects due to increased income that could be spent in local communities on basic needs.

We encourage the next Mayor of Detroit to actively support a Working Parents Tax Credit at the state level. Equally important, we call on the next Mayor of Detroit to welcome the expansion of RX Kids implementation in Detroit in order to expand the reach of cash support for parents of young children.

Doing so would bolster the wellbeing of children and families.

3. Increase investment in early childhood education services.

The needs of Detroit's early childhood education sector are vast. Detroit has a shortage of more than 15,500 childcare seats if we want to meet the needs of Detroit families. The number of early educators continues to drop due to the low wages and lack of benefits. Providers continue to grapple with cumbersome and expensive zoning & licensing processes that make it difficult to open or expand their locations, and a funding model that does not cover the true cost of their work. Parents are contending with childcare costs that consume 23% to 31% of the average median household income.

There has been great movement in Detroit to transform our early education system through the work of a vast array of community partners, early educators, parents, and business owners. But more needs to be done to figure out the solutions and the funding mechanisms to pay for them.

Other cities and states have addressed the issue of limited early childhood education head on, by bringing together those closest to the solution to identify how government can be a part of the solution rather than a distraction. This includes places like DC which provides free childcare, healthcare, and drastically increased wages for their early childhood educators, or regions across Michigan who developed comprehensive strategies to address the barriers and needs of their parents and providers through deep research and community engagement. Denver launched a coordinated and funded effort to recruit, educate and support new early childhood educators while simultaneously supporting providers with funding and technical assistance to remodel or expand their facilities. Philadelphia's Child Care Facility Fund provides up to $25,000 for providers, including home based providers, to upgrade their facilities.

We encourage the next Mayor of Detroit to be a leader in the State, and find a path to invest in the infrastructure, funding, and support necessary to ensure all children have a great start and working parents have access to quality care.

4. Enact an early childcare education subsidy for all job seeking and education seeking parents.

Giving parents the ability to enroll their children in safe, nurturing, and educationally sound early childhood education programs can provide the flexibility and time they need to focus on their job search or education. Current state subsidy is a cumbersome process that many parents simply do not have the time to wade through. Michigan also limits subsidies to those working or those seeking a high school diploma, with some exceptions for those in job training.

Over half of all states provide childcare subsidy to job seeking parents and parents in school, including Ohio. We call on the next Mayor of Detroit to advocate for changes at the state level that allow job and

education seeking parents access to state child care subsidy. There have also been local examples where using flexible funding to cover the cost of high quality childcare has increased employment, job stability and economic mobility for parents. In these instances, the amount of paperwork and eligibility screening burden was low for both the parents and the provider. The next Mayor also has the ability to identify other innovative solutions within our existing systems.

POLICY PILLAR 03

Ensure Access to Employment & Good Jobs for Everyone in Detroit

Everyone who wants to work in Detroit should have access to a job, yet too many people are left behind. And we should work to ensure that every job is a quality job that is safe and pays a thriving wage. Today, we have a shortage of good jobs in our city and too many Black and Latinx Detroiters work in jobs with inadequate pay, few benefits, and insufficient career pathways.

To ensure that our city is a place where anyone who wants to work can access good jobs, we must:

1. Expand transitional jobs programs to any Detroiter who wants to work.

Transitional jobs programs are defined as wage-paid, real work opportunities that typically target individuals facing barriers to employment. Transitional jobs programs leverage public, private, and non-profit job opportunities and can utilize a work-crew, individual placement, or social enterprise structures. Transitional jobs programs typically are time limited and can create direct pathways to permanent employment with the same employer or another employer.

These programs have been called publicly funded jobs programs, subsidized employment programs, and other names. They have over 50 years of implementation and research evidence as a model that increases employment and earnings, decreases recidivism and homelessness, bolsters efforts to reduce gun violence, and supports employers and communities. The strategy is adaptable and scalable and has been leveraged in robust ways in cities across the country as a core part of the workforce and employment ecosystem.

Detroit has had experience implementing transitional jobs programs, but with limited long-term success.

We call on the next Mayor to radically reimagine the role that transitional jobs programs could have in the city and for residents. First, we call on the Mayor's Office to partner with residents, philanthropy, providers, advocates, and others to co-design a citywide transitional jobs model with residents' voice at the forefront. The city should explore a myriad of federal, state, and city funding streams that can sustainably fund a transitional jobs program.

2. Ensure public transportation options that get Detroiters conveniently to their jobs and leverage the power of transit to create good jobs.

Transportation, and the lack of it, has long been identified as one of the most significant barriers standing in the way of forward movement for Detroit job seekers and workers, the majority who leave the city each day for work.

The next Mayor of Detroit has the opportunity to be bold and visionary and see transportation as both a critical residential service and a tool for job creation. We need thoughtful, innovative, and long-term strategy to address the operations and access needs of Detroiters, and the needs of current and future DDOT workers.

First, we call on the next Mayor of Detroit to address the issues of transportation access and services:

- Invest in long-term planning for transit-oriented development that builds the vibrant corridors Detroit deserves.
- Make a first class transit system that residents and workers are proud to use every day. Bus stop facilities should provide riders with the dignity they deserve, like heated shelters, live bus tracking, Wi-Fi access, and a clean place to sit.
- Transit schedules and routes should be designed to meet the needs of residents and workers through deep engagement with the community.
- Residents deserve “last mile" solutions to make sure that people or businesses embedded in residential neighborhoods can also access major routes more easily.
- Address cost issues, like providing free transit to all residents under 18, regardless of education enrollment or free transit for residents transitioning into work.

Second, we encourage the next Mayor to leverage the variety of jobs within our Department of Transportation (DDOT) to provide good careers and job growth for Detroiters:

- Increase the job quality for DDOT staff, inclusive of pay and benefits, to keep good staff at DDOT and provide the family-thriving wage they deserve.
- Build on existing efforts and build a comprehensive municipal career pathway model in partnership with Amalgamated Transit Union that positions Detroiters to take critical roles within DDOT, including those who are justice-impacted.
- Engage residents to develop a recruitment pathway that engages all residents into occupations throughout the department, not just drivers and mechanics.
- Partner with our regional transit agencies to build an overall transportation sector strategy and position Detroiters to grow in their career across the broader transit ecosystem in SE Michigan.

.

3. Advance a comprehensive initiative to advance business owner succession planning and job preservation in Detroit.

Michigan faces a critical economic and social turning point as a growing number of aging small business owners near retirement without succession plans. With over 80% of these owners lacking a clear exit strategy, nearly 400,000 jobs in Metro Detroit—and 1 million statewide—are at risk due to potential business closures or sales to external parties. This massive wealth transfer is often called the "Silver Tsunami". Transitioning these businesses to employee ownership represents a powerful yet underutilized strategy to preserve local jobs, maintain our commercial corridors, industry preservation (like smaller manufacturers), build community wealth, and create more equitable and resilient communities. Detroit is not immune to this future.

We urge the next Mayor to support an ecosystem where these strategies can thrive and Detroit workers have the knowledge, resources, and support to transition their employer into a worker-owner model. Business owners can also leave a legacy of a thriving business behind when they decide to retire or move on. Ultimately, this is a win for Detroit businesses, workers, economic development, and the local economy.

We encourage the next Mayor to engage with and listen to workers and business owners to determine their interests and needs as it relates to business ownership succession, employee co-ownership with the goal of advancing the following priorities:

- Support the development of a suite of education and resources for stakeholders and practitioners in Detroit who are interested in business owner succession models and help foster coordinated efforts to advance worker ownership initiatives in Detroit;
- Establish a grant for technical assistance for business owners interested in succession planning and selling the business to Detroit workers; and
- Establish a self-renewing fund to convert Detroit businesses to worker ownership models.

4. Pilot a guaranteed jobs program.

Too many Detroiters – especially Black and Latino residents and women – work in low-paying jobs with few benefits and too few opportunities for career advancement. Universal Basic Employment (or a jobs guarantee) is about creating a sustainable wage job for all – and the best simultaneous investment in people, places, and businesses. It is a policy idea that has been championed for nearly 100 years as a transformational way to reduce poverty, bolster the availability and demand to create good jobs in a region, and attract people to a community.

As this idea gains traction in places like Cleveland, Detroit has an opportunity to be at the forefront of innovation and access to opportunity for all Detroiters. We urge the city of Detroit to learn from Cleveland's experience and advance a human-centered, co-created process for building and implementing a guaranteed jobs pilot project in Detroit.

5. Establish a Detroit Civic Corps.

Detroit has community-focused and community-invested people talent in spades. As a city, we will grow and prosper as they prosper. However, all too often we do not strategically invest in our residents as the next public and nonprofit system leaders or community builders.

We call on the next Mayor of Detroit to establish a 21st Century Detroit Civic Corps that is public and privately funded.

The Corps should employ and train Detroit leaders who are often already leading on their blocks or in their neighborhoods on an unpaid volunteer basis to further understand neighborhood needs, local and community policies, and to continue to invest in their communities. The Civic Corps could be deployed to address neighborhood blight, environmental concerns, retrofit public buildings, or support civic engagement of residents. The Corps could be a hub for leaders to better understand local issues, gain critical skills that benefit their communities and careers, and build the social capital often needed to advance in careers. Finally, the Civic Corps could be a hub where leaders learn from and build upon policy and practice innovation in Detroit, across Michigan, and elsewhere - thus continuing to establish a backbone and infrastructure to support Detroit as an epicenter of economic justice innovation.

Special attention should be paid to supporting individuals in advancing in their careers in public, nonprofit, academic, and private sectors in order to bring their knowledge about community needs and policies that affect them into decision making bodies affecting the city.

Learn more about the Detroit Economic Justice Coalition, review our Candidate Scorecards, and see how to support at www.detroiteconomicjustice.org.